Half-a-year after launch developer interview: The relationship between new Agent 3 and Smallfry, why Special Weapons resemble those in S1, and a deep dive into the rugged Splatlandian Inkling world!

Translated by rassicas. Translator's notes will [[be in brackets like so.]]
This interview was originally from issue no.1796 of Famitsu magazine, with a note that it will be posted online at a later date with revisions.

UPDATE 5/15/2023: The interview has now been shared on the Famitsu website, with a sizable amount of questions that were not in the magazine version. These new questions will be highlighted like so.

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Splatoon 3's design concepts, worldbuilding, updates and more; we asked the developers questions that players are wanting to know.

*Hisashi **Nogami**: Producer*
*Seita **Inoue**: Art Director*
*Shintaro **Sato**: Programming Director*
-----: interviewer

--PAGE 1--

What parts should and should not be changed.

----Six months have passed since Splatoon 3's release. It sold 3.45 million units within three days of its launch, and 10 million units worldwide within the first 3 months. How do you feel about sales so far?
Inoue : Honestly, I'm quite happy that so many people have picked up the game. We had a major goal of establishing the relatively young IP "Splatoon" as a standard title, and I think we've taken the first step toward that goal.

Nogami : At the time of the game's release, many people had been playing since S2, but around the end of that year, many people picked up Splatoon for the first time. I feel that the age range of the Splatoon community is broadening.

Sato : It makes me glad to see that even those around me who have not played the series before are getting enthusiastic about it.

---- While there's a growing number of new players with S3, there's also been some harsh opinions about the game's updates from existing players.
Sato : Due to the popularity of the Nintendo Switch, we've been getting feedback from users of all ages with different gaming experiences. It may take some time for us to consider the content and implement updates, but we will do our best to respond to the player's enthusiasm as much as possible.

Nogami: S3 is a new game, so we're putting as much effort into the new parts of it as we are into the parts that shouldn't be changed, all in order to make the game interesting to as many people as possible. On our end, we're doing our best, but it is difficult to respond to all the feedback. We have two years of updates planned, so we will continue development while taking care of the health of our staff.

----At the game’s launch, there were many communication errors and interruptions in matchmaking. Were there network-related changes that influenced this?

Sato: Since the game is played over the Internet, unexpected things can happen when many people are connected. We are currently working to fix and improve things one by one.

---- I get the impression that the balancing changes in 3 are not as heavy compared to those from when S2 was released. Is there any difference in the intent of these balancing changes?

Sato: There is no difference in our intentions when it comes to balancing, and we’ve been consistently making adjustments to make the content more like the first Splatoon game. As many people are attached to their weapons, we're careful not to suddenly make them feel totally different. The only thing I’d say is that we made a lot of big changes to S2 at the time of its release, so the post-launch adjustments we made to make it easier to play and more like Splatoon 1 ended up being big changes. Therefore, from around the time when the final Splatfest in S2 ended, from S2 we gradually prepared for S3. However, there were many new elements that we could not properly determine how to adjust until after the user base had spent time using them For this reason, in S3, we’ve made changes to many things at a time after being able to sufficiently evaluate it, such as the adjustments made in version 3.1.0 at the end of March.

---- Indeed, so far, weapons like the Crab Tank have undergone significant changes in how it's assessed by the players. So your policy is to consider the best balancing adjustments based on such assessments?

Nogami: That's right. Some mains and specials take some getting used to, but once you do, you’ll be able to use them to their full potential. And then when someone says, "This weapon is strong when used like this," the way other players use it may also change. For this reason, we make adjustments while taking into account the long-term changes in the community as a whole.

Sato: If all the capabilities of a weapon are fully exploited from the beginning with no new discoveries after that, it may seem boring in some respects.

Nogami: We have our own expectations of what we think will happen, but there are some things that we think shouldn’t happen. We’ve been looking at the data as well as everyone's reactions as we consider what kind of adjustments to make.

Utilizing the power of the number “3”

---- Now, please tell us about the concept behind Splatoon 3. There are three members of Deep Cut, Tri-color battles, the Tri-Stringer…were ideas developed by tying it all to the number “3”?

Inoue : “3” was one of the core parts of our overall concept. In games and movies, the third film in a series is

often referred to as the culmination of the series, but I believe it also has a celebratory appeal to it. This celebratory, festive atmosphere of S3 is also suitable for expressing chaos, another main theme of 3. We've also mixed various "3" elements together. The "Surimi" in Surimi Rengo [[known as Deep Cut in English]], is combination of "surimi" [[which means fish paste]], the English word "three" [[read like surii in JP]] and "Mi" [[which is another reading of the kanji for 3 in JP]]. For other elements, if we could fit a three motif in it, odds were high we'd use it (laughs).

Nogami: It's more puns, as per usual (laughs)

----There sure are a lot of "3"s in it (laughs). The name "Surimi Rengo" fits the "3" theme so well that I thought you might have had it in mind for a long time.

Inoue: While it was hard to come up with a good idea, when it suddenly came to me, I immediately used it. For their catchphrase, I thought there wouldn't be anything that could live up to "Ika, yoroshiku~" [["Staaaay fresh!", when directly translated, "Squid, best regards"]] and "nuritaku~ru….Tentakuru!" [["Don't get cooked…Stay off the Hook!" directly translated "Ink it up... Tentacle!!"]], so I was surprised that such a fitting "Hona, Kaisan!" [["Catch ya later!" directly translates to something like "Well then, let's call it here!" but there's a pun on the word "seafood" *kaisanbutsu* in there]] popped into mind (laughs).

----(laughs). So with this being "3" as mentioned, were you aiming for this to be a culmination of it all?

Inoue: It is a culmination, but I also wanted to express the power of the number "3". This is something that could only be done with a numbered title.

---- I believe there's a theme of "Chaos" in addition to "3" in this game. Did you develop concepts after the victory of "Chaos" in the Splatoon's final Splatfest, "Chaos vs Order"? Also, did you consider what it would be like if "Order" had won?

Inoue: There were some vague ideas before the final Splatfest, but it wasn't until after the Splatfest that things started getting more fleshed out.

---- So if Order had won, we would've gotten a very different Splatoon 3 from what we have now.

Inoue: That's right. With how we were giving our all to Splatoon 2 till the very end, there wasn't too much time to think about what was going to happen next.

---- I feel that the graphics have evolved in S3. Does this mean that you've mastered the capabilities of the Switch's hardware?

Inoue: I think the main reason is not so much that we've mastered the hardware, but rather that we have more know-how. As for the design aspect, we did not make major design changes to the player characters and weapons, so we were able to further refine the graphics.

Sato: Since the game deals with ink, it seems that some of our basic research on ink has advanced. In the previous games, the splashes from shooting were represented by textures, but this time they are represented by polygons.
So said accumulated know-how has allowed us to focus our efforts on the areas where we need to.

----Such secrets to the ink! One of the things you have adopted for the game is a seasonal system, how did

that come about?

Sato : A seasonal system wasn't something we were thinking of doing from the very start. As the number of players increases, the purpose of playing Splatoon grows as well. We wanted to add more things that go up as players continue to play the game, not just a rank that changes based on wins and losses. So for this, we thought that something that changes over a period of time and fits the world of Splatoon is fashion, and this led to the creation of the catalog system. The current form of the catalog was created with the idea that as the catalog is updated, new items will be added to the Splatoon world as time progresses. This makes it easy to talk about periods of time in Splatoon, and creates a more festive atmosphere.

----It feels players have a good chance to start even in the middle of the season. On the other hand, there may be cases where players leave in the middle of the season. Are Splatfests and Big Run the way to fill that gap?

Nogami: The number of players increases at the beginning of a new season, but we have a steady stream of players at other times of the year as well, and we haven't seen a big drop in the number of players just because it's the middle of the season.
We believe that people are playing with a sense of balance, finding new goals every three months of the season.

Sato: For example, if you add one new weapon per week, the update will only be relevant to those who are interested in that weapon. However, if you add many elements together for a season, the content becomes relevant not only to you, but for a variety of players.

----True, immediately after an update it's easier to have teams full of new weapons compared to the previous games. it feels like a festival in a way.

Nogami: It is nice when there are many people having fun together at the same time, and I feel it's more exciting to concentrate on the game to create a topic of conversation among the players.
As is the case with other games, I think the increase or decrease in play time depends largely on the rhythm of everyone's life.
Many play only on their days off, but the number of players increases on weekends, and continues to increase during long holidays. On the other hand, it tends to decrease once the holidays are over, as well during periods of change, such as a new school year. Probably because people are busier in their normal lives.
It seems that many play because of Splatfests and Big Runs, as during this time the number of people playing increases at once, and the trend continues to be high for a while.
Incidentally, the largest daily player base in S2 was during the first anniversary Splatfest, but the most recent Splatfest in S3 had a much larger daily player base than that.

----I see that the number of players has increased considerably. Regarding the battles, why are the battle game modes the same as in S2?

Sato: In the world of Splatoon, Turf Wars are an enduringly popular sport. I don't think that will change in the future.
So one reason is to stay consistent with the setting. Another reason is that we want to make sure that a variety of people can play the game, and if we add more game modes, we will have to ask people to figure out new rules. On the other hand, we cannot reduce the number of old game modes in order to add new ones.
Every game mode must be someone's favorite, so we decided to refine each game mode rather than

eliminate existing ones.

----What's the ratio of each mode played?

Nogami: It depends on the time of day, but Anarchy Battle (Open), Anarchy Battle (Challenge), Regular Battle, and Salmon Run are played in roughly equal proportions.
In total, the ratio of X-battles is less than 10% of the total. Even among those who have reached S+, it seems that many of them play X-Battles and Anarchy Battles separately.

---- One more characteristic of S3 is that the stages feel more long and narrow compared to S2. Was it a conscious decision to structure the stages like this?
[[TN:This is about the "hallway" stages lol]]

Sato: The shape of the stages isn't something we decide on ahead of time. Not just in S3, but throughout the series what we've kept in mind when creating stages is what kind of play and ingenuity can be created in the characteristic parts of the stages. In addition, we also create the layouts needed for each ruleset. The optimum shape of that layout will change, influenced by the main and special weapons that appear in each game.

----Various objects on the stages have recently been added through updates, but in the past when stages were being renovated, they would sometimes take them out of rotation, with an announcement that they were under construction.

Nogami: We did not decide in advance how to revamp the game at that time, but rather, we made adjustments according to how players played and the situation at that time, and we plan to do the same this time as well.

----With 2 years of updates planned, have you decided on the ratio of returning stages to new stages?

Sato: When it comes to stages, the most important question is "What are the hottest locations in the Inkling world?" Since S3 is set in Splatsville, stages near there tend to be what's "in."

----Hammerhead Bridge is such a place, isn't it.

Sato: We wanted to express the change in time, so the completion of the long-under-construction bridge is a reminder of how seven years have passed. The completion of the bridge is what led to the boom in Splatlandian sensibilities, so Hammerhead Bridge is a stage that represents Splatoon 3 in a way. And although the name is the same as before, it is a new stage in terms of gameplay.

Inoue: For Inklings and Octolings, battling it out in the Splatlands is the trend right now. Therefore, they've also moved to the Splatlands, and spots around Splatsville are appearing as stages.

----There's a sense of geographical relationships,, with the NILS statue visible from Hammerhead Bridge.

Sato: One of the features of "Splatoon" is that time flows even in the game, so we try to make the flow of time felt even in the smallest details of the stages.

----By the way, is it possible to bring back Shifty Stations?

Sato: Shifty Stations are located in a mysterious place that Marina had arranged through mysterious connections. There may be a way to get back there if we can figure out how. However, it seems difficult as Marina is also busy as a musician. In its mysterious nature, it's also unknown if the same locations are even

still there.

Shifty Stations were battle stages in Splatoon 2 Splatfests. Different ones were prepared for each Splatfest.

Although different from the Shifty Stations, the 6th Splatfest, a "The Legend of Zelda" collaboration, surprised many players with the appearance of a special Triforce-shaped stage in Scorch Gorge.

The reason for adding Stringers and Splatanas? Because they’re cool.

---- In some matches, it feels easy to get pitted up against weapons that are the same class as your own. Is this intentional?

Sato : The matchmaking system of S2 did not divide the teams well in some ways, so this time we introduced a new matchmaking system. However, I feel that we need to continue to pursue the balance between making sure that there is no bias toward one type of weapon and providing a fresh experience each time the player plays the game. So the current state of the matchmaking system isn’t perfect, and we plan to continue making adjustments to it in the future.

----A commendation system has been added to the post-battle results.

Sato: Splatoon is a game in which everyone works together to win battles. There are parts of the game that can be expressed numerically, such as the number of opponents splatted and turf inked, but there are also things that cannot be expressed numerically when playing for victory.
Since players are matched with other players who are close in Rank, there are times when you can't win, yet you must have done your best in some way. We felt that it’d be a pity if such efforts went unrecognized, so we introduced a commendation system [[medals]].

---- The Stringers and Splatanas are new weapon classes in this game. Why were these weapons chosen?

Inoue : Well, because they’re cool (laughs).

---- Pretty straightforward!

Inoue: One of the reasons is that I had this idea of a character with a bow standing in a rugged landscape, and that became part of the first promotional trailer. When we implemented the dualies, we chose them because it’s Splatoon “2” and there’s 2 guns. We like to have things like that that are easy to understand. But of course, it was not only about how cool it looked, but also about whether or not it could actually be used as a weapon.

---- I get the impression that neither of these new weapons are all that easy to use.

Sato : As long as we are creating a new class of weapons, we want to create an experience that is unique to it. As a result, it's necessary for them to feel differently from the conventional weapons. I think that's part of the weapon's individuality and charm, and that's something we aim for.

Nogami : The most important thing is to create a pleasant moment when using the weapon, such as hitting the target with all three shots with a Stringer, or using a Splatana to kill with a charged slash at just the right moment.

-- Some players seem to feel that there are only a few new weapons: the Splattershot Nova, Big Swig Roller, Snipewriter, in addition to Stringers and Splatanas.

Sato: In reality, aside from the Brellas and Dualies, the only new Weapons that were released right after the release of Splatoon 2 are the Clash Blaster, Squeezer, and Goo Tuber. Therefore, although the number of new weapons has not changed much, in S3 we have made all the weapons available from the beginning, so the number of additional weapons may seem relatively small.

---- I have the impression that many of the special weapons are based on the motifs of Splatoon 1. Did you incorporate some of the items from S1 as a culmination of the series?

Inoue : From an artistic point of view, the concept of "Splatoon" is to portray the counterculture of the youth. Therefore, we decided on the direction of Splatoon 3 to be something that had the feeling of being a counter to counterculture, and to give off that impression that S1 had, yet as something that has developed further.

Sato : Since many people started with S2, we also wanted to give them a taste of some of the elements that did not appear in that game. However, considering the time that has passed since S1, and keeping the culture of the Splatlands in mind, we thought that the special weapons of S1 must have been modified and made more flashy, so we decided to introduce those modified versions into S3.

Inoue: Drawing from the trend of "heavily modifying and then using old things=fresh" is key.

---- How did Tricolor Battles come about?

Sato : With the "3" in the name, from the start we wanted to have a three-color battle. However, if we simply increased the number of teams while sticking with the same standard Turf War rules, we expected various

issues to occur, such as just one team being attacked too intensively. On the other hand, since S2 we had been thinking about creating asymmetrical battles in which the attackers and defenders would be divided into two sides. We thought we could solve the problem by mixing the two, and thus Tricolor Battles were born.

Nogami : Since it requires more balancing adjustments than the regular two-color battles, we decided to release one stage for Tricolor battles at each Splatfest. I think it's good that we've been able to produce differences with each Splatfest as a result of that.

---- There seems to be a high technical hurdle to it.

Sato: That's true. However, our researcher in charge of programming helped it take shape more smoothly than expected.

--I have the impression that the more Splatfests happen where I play as an Attacker on Tri-color, the less I get attacked by other Attackers. Do you think the rules are spreading more widely among players?

Sato: Yes, in addition to that, I think there's also an emotional aspect to it. I wanted to create a subtle state of the other Attacking team being both an opponent and an ally. When you see someone with an Ultra signal, you tend to attack them, right? Your own team gets more points for securing the Ultra signal, so I think that kind of delicate relationship of interests is interesting.

Nogami: It seems that players have developed their own strategies, such as fighting together as allies to win at just the right time, despite being opponents.

--PAGE 2--

Chaos with a sense of reality and an exotic air.

----I feel like Splatsville has a kind of Asian atmosphere to it. Please tell us more about the concepts and imaginings behind Splatsville.

Inoue : Keeping with the "3" concept, we designed the city to have a 3-D structure. The motif of the city was inspired by densely populated areas in Asia, where various buildings are crammed together from top to bottom. This also works to depict the chaos that is often seen in rapidly developing cities, with all the old and new buildings joined together.

---- The monuments in Splatsville depict a bird, snake, and a pig. Why were these animals chosen?

Inoue: The chicken, snake, and pig, are three animals that symbolize worldly desires known as the "three poisons" [[in Buddhism. These poisons are greed, ill will, and delusion]]. This fits well with the impression that Splatsville gives off, and represents how Splatsville is a city with history to it.

-----We see restaurants and eateries open during Splatfest, but do they only open during Splatfests?

Inoue: There are restaurants here and there, but the ones facing the alleys seem to have a lot of energy to them during Splatfests.

----Is there any reason why there are so many Sea-Cucumber Phone users in Splatsville?

Inoue: Those phones, the sturdiness and the strength of the antenna, which can be connected anywhere, make it suitable for the Splatlands, so it has a significant share of the market.

---- The Lobby is high-tech, with the introduction of the Copy Machine and player ghosts. Is this a technology born out of the times?

Inoue: Splatsville is undergoing rapid redevelopment. In our world, it is often the case that the latest technology is introduced in such rapidly-developing places, so I wanted to depict that kind of situation.

----I see. Only the area around the station has a high-tech feel, it's a different atmosphere from the back alleys.

Inoue: Other parts of the city have yet to catch up in development. The lobby is being developed under the leadership of the brand Squidforce, as they're responsible for those technical developments.

----Squidforce seems to be making a lot of money, there are many advertisements for them on the screens in the lobby.

Inoue: Yeah, they're like a multinational corporation.

Nogami: Ranked battles too, was a street sport played secretly in back alleys by a handful of Inklings back in the S1 days, but as it has become more and more sophisticated and the number of competitors have increased, it has transitioned into a major sport with many companies are involved.

----Is the music played in the lobby like a radio?

Sato: A jellyfish DJ located on the second floor of the lobby plays the music. Usually, the music is selected depending on the time of day and the atmosphere, but there are special times when he plays music based on a particular theme.

Nogami: Those special times are the same all over the world, so I think people can exchange opinions when playing with their friends, like, "Oh, this song is good."

----About how often is this special time?

Sato: It comes every day, usually at a certain time, so please check it out!

----There's more and more locker items and the locker alone doesn't feel like enough space, is there anything you can do to expand it .....?

Sato: Thanks for enjoying the lockers. While I think how you use the limited space is the fun part, I understand your desire to put a lot of things in there.

Deep Cut, the lovable Splatlandian adversaries.

---- During Splatfests, the city feels even more festive than in the previous games.

Inoue : In the previous entries of the series, we wanted to make the Splatfests feel like a live concert. But this time, "traditional festival in a historical town + Splatfest" was the concept that we developed. We thought that if we could depict the Splatfests as like a Shinto ritual, we could express Splatsville as a city of chaos with a sense of reality to it.

Nogami: Although the main Splatfest lasts for 48 hours, we set aside the Splatfest Sneak Peek so that those who are unable to attend due to time conflicts can still enjoy a bit of the festive atmosphere.

---- Please tell us about Deep Cut, who liven up the city during Splatfests.

Inoue : We started the creation of Deep Cut by thinking of them not only as the representatives of the Splatfests, but also as “loveable bad guys”. If we were to just make more idols, they’d be going up against the already popular Squid Sisters and Off the Hook. Therefore, we wanted to create a musical group with a slightly different role. Since they’re the antagonists, we chose to base them around sharks, moray eels, and rays, predators of squids and octopuses. We designed them to be both active in Splatsville and in Story mode. They have the backstory of being a rascally bunch, yet are popular representatives of historic clans.

----They do have that feeling of being a little bit bad.

Nogami: That’s because they’re truly “Bankara” (laughs)
[[Bankara is Japanese name of Splatlands, but it’s a real word that means “rough and uncouth”]]

-----In one of the Sunken Scrolls, they were called the "hometown hype squad," but in reality, they’re a band of thieves. So does that mean they have both a public image and a secret side to them?

Inoue: Basically, they really are that “hometown hype squad”, but the financial situation in their hometown is so bad that they’ve taken up banditry to earn money.

---- I see! I find it unique that Big Man isn’t humanoid.

Inoue: Originally, I wanted to make a group of three since it’s Splatoon “3”. I wanted a non-humanoid member to be, despite appearances, the most sensible person in the group.

Nogami: Big Man can be a bit biased towards himself though. (laughs)

---- By the way, the battle with Big Man in Story Mode seemed very close to Phantamanta in Super Mario Sunshine, was this intentional…?

Inoue: Ink, manta ray, boss, just had to make a reference to it. (laughs)

---- Right, right (laughs). The way Shiver speaks makes her sound like someone from Kyoto, what's the motif here?

Inoue: The motifs of S1 and S2 were based on Western culture, so we wanted to mix in elements that differed from that.

----A video was released of the vocalists for Shiver and Frye recording music, and they both seem to resemble their respective characters. Did you make the designs similar after casting?

Inoue: It really happened by chance, as was the case with the Squid Sisters and Off the Hook. It's a miraculous coincidence, the character designs were decided on first, they were casted based on the impression of only the voices and songs.

----By the way, does Big Man's vocalist also resemble him?

Inoue: Big man….is a mystery. (laughs)

---- I'll be looking forward to when that information comes to light (laughs). Their music and choreography have a Japanese flavor to it. What is the concept behind this?

Inoue : The concept is not necessarily Japanese, but rather a "mix of exotic flavors." The word "Bankara" [[Japanese name of Splatlands, means rough and uncouth]] was originally coined as a direct antonym for "Haikara" [[Japanese name of Inkopolis, comes from "high-collar", stylish]] so if you feel that there are strong Japanese elements, it may be due to the Japanese ties to the concept of "Bankara."

[[TN: I had to keep it short in the passage, but If you want a better understanding of the real-world "Bankara" fashion movement that's the inspiration behind Splatsville, I would recommend reading this *Unseen Japan* article.]]

----There's also more tentacle styles (hairstyles) that have been added, is this something that's unique to the Splatlands?

Inoue: The idea is that this Splatlandian, "Bankara" fashion craze is sweeping the Inkling world, so that's led to these hairstyles becoming popular. This is something that's been brought up a lot, but the reason for the inclusion of the braided style is because a braid has 3 strands (laughs)
[[TN: this is even more obvious in JP, as the word for "braid" (三つ編み), literally has the word for "3" (三) in it]]

--- I see (laughs).

Inoue: Newly added styles like perms, unkempt hair, and eyebrow cuts are in vogue with the "Bankara" fashion craze.

Nogami : Some more extreme treatments of the tentacles, like roasting them, have also gotten popular. But I think that's more so part of the fashion craze rather than an advancement in technology.

Inoue : By the way, styling tentacles is kind of like messing with your fingernails, so it doesn't seem to hurt them.

Unique characters in the Splatlands.

---- The shopkeepers sure are unique. Regarding Gnarly Eddy and Nails, is Nails forcing Gnarly Eddy to tag along with him?

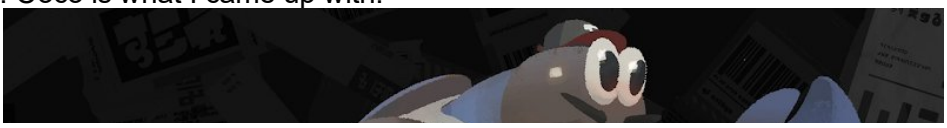
Inoue: Nails is small, but he's a skilled conversationalist. He recruited Gnarly Eddy, who isn't so great at talking, but has a cool and relaxing vibe to him. Since Nails hired Eddy as a clerk and model for his cool headgear shop, he doesn't seem to mind the shyness.

---- Now the clothing shop clerk, Jel La Fleur, does he have any relation to Jelonzo or Jelfonzo?

Inoue: He's among the handful of jellyfish out there that can speak the Inkling language, but he's a species of jellyfish different from Jelfonzo and Jelonzo. He has quite long tentacles which, despite appearances, are poisonous. He acts incredibly cold towards those who are tacky and unfashionable.

---- How did Mr. Coco come to look the way he does?

Inoue : It's because he was tempered in the harsh environment of the Splatlands. When you leave your familiar place of residence and go to another city, you are sometimes surprised to find that many people have different physiques and appearances depending on the culture of that city. I tried to express that feeling in his design, and Mr. Coco is what I came up with.

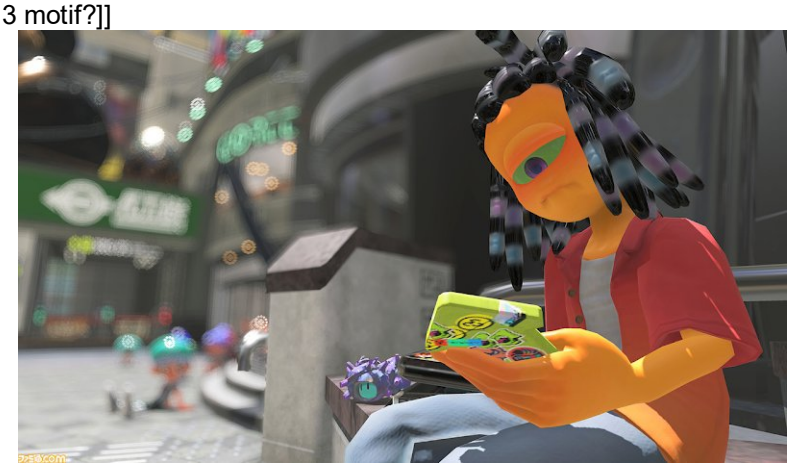


---- Is Harmony still actively a part of Chirpy Chips?

Inoue : She is, on an irregular basis. She spends much of her time in Hotlantis, but when she feels like it, she does sing.

----Why has Murch grown up so quickly?

Inoue: I wanted to do something like when you see a relative's kid for the first time in a while, and they've grown up a lot. 'If it's been 3 days since you last saw the boy, take a closer look,' as they say.
[[TN: the last sentence he says is an idiom derived from Romance of the Three Kingdoms, a classical piece of Chinese literature. Just means that "a child can grow and change completely in a short amount of time." I wonder if he quoted it because it fits with the 3 motif?]]



---- I feel that Li'l Judd has become fluffy compared to how he was in S2.

Inoue : I'd say his fur has gotten more stiff than fluffy. He's always been aiming for Judd's position, but he couldn't achieve it, so he became a bit lazy and ended up like this.

----Is Marigold, who works at places like the Tableturf reception and Crab-n-Go, originally from the Inkling's

society?

Inoue: She originally is from Splatsville. She's sometimes portrayed as a guide, a clerk, and as someone who we can't be certain is the same person or not.
With the opening of the train station, she's been in Inkopolis Plaza, and is doing a lot of different things in Splatsville. Maybe there's another Marigold that the player doesn't know about. Rumor has it that she knows everything about Splatsville….

---- I'm getting more and more curious about her true identity (laughs). Next, I'd like to know more about the people in Inkopolis. I was particularly shocked by the look of the shoe shop keeper, Fred Crumbs. What did he look like before he got fried?

Inoue : He was just an ordinary mackerel before he became fried. He liked shoes, so he applied for a part-time job, and when he found out that the requirement was an "extra crispy" fashion sense, he became bursting with fried flavor (laughs)

---- But before getting fried, he had to get… opened…

Nogami: Yeah, I guess that's a necessary part of it. (laughs)

-----Was he able to wear shoes as a regular horse mackerel?

Inoue: He's found that wearing them on his filets is the most fitting.

----I thought that a shoe shop keeper has to have a lot of legs.

Inoue: They can be either that or fried food. When it comes to fried food, I first think of fried shrimp, and then fried horse mackerel.

----Is getting deep fried a huge thing to prepare for? Or is it really not a big deal?

Inoue: It's not that big of a deal. In human terms, it's kind of like getting a piercing.

----Is there a particular reason why he's carrying a lemon wedge around?

Inoue: Fried food isn't the best for digestion, so the lemon helps cover that. It's the perfect combination. The lemon is supposed to be like a clutch bag.

---- Are the shoes Fred Crumbs is wearing just for him?

Inoue : We asked the designers to come up with a style that fits a deep-fried character. It's not out of the question for those models of shoes to become available for Inklings and Octolings, but for now, those shoes are exclusively for him. What we're trying to express with that exclusiveness is that it could be something that'd make someone who likes shoes go, "Where did you get those?"

----So he's so serious and loves shoes to the point that he got deep-fried for his job.

Inoue: He has a very distinctive appearance, but I think of him as an ordinary young man. In this world, there are many people who look tough on the outside, yet are pretty normal on the inside. That's how I imagine him.

---- Are Crusty Sean and Fred Crumbs acquainted with each other?

Inoue: Not particularly, no. Crusty Sean is pretty famous among fellow fried folk for his travels to various places. Fred Crumbs at least might know of Crusty Sean, one way or another.

---- Crusty Sean's Wandercrust journey as seen in the Splatnet app is over, but will we see more of him in the future?

Inoue: I haven't thought about it at all yet, but Crusty Sean is a fun-loving guy, so maybe there will be something else with him in the future. By the way, the food truck he used in S2 has been scrapped in Mincemeat Metalworks.

---- I'll try and look for it! (laughs) Now, please tell me about the relationship between Sheldon, Shelly, and Donny.

Inoue: While they look like the same species, Sheldon is a horseshoe crab, and Shelly and Donny are tadpole shrimps. They're not related by blood, it's more like Shelly and Donny admired Sheldon and became his apprentices. Sheldon has always had a policy of focusing on the new stores, so he is in charge of the store in Splatsville. So Shelly and Donny were left in charge of the store in Inkopolis Plaza because of their enthusiasm.

----They seem young and full of energy.

Inoue: They can recite Sheldon's lines perfectly.

Nogami: I think they worked hard to memorize them (laughs).

Inoue: A love for weapons is the most important thing to Sheldon, and I think that is the reason why he hired the both of them.

----Is the Inkopolis Square store also not closed?

Inoue: Yes, it’s still open. I believe Sheldon hired someone else to work at that store.

----Annie’s fashion has changed due to the influence of music that she likes, what kind of bands is she into?

Inoue: She’s suddenly gotten addicted to intense, gothic metal bands. She started putting all her earnings into it and now dresses in that way.

----Has a band that she’s into not made an appearance in-game yet?

Inoue: That’s right. In the Inkling world there’s a lot of active bands, more than the ones that have already been depicted in the Splatoon series.

----Is it a famous band?

Inoue: Not really, It's like a band that she’s dug up. The band has a strong fan base. I originally designed her with the idea that she's a shopkeeper who gets very intensely into subcultures, but is basically an indoorsy person. I wondered how she’d look after 7 years had passed, and that's how she ended up.

----I see that Jelonzo has bought a house, so he’s working at the store and settling down?

Inoue: Yeah, he’s going through the stages of life in order. The house he bought is a used property along a train line, he’s been renovating it.

----So for Spyke, did he do a lot of things and run out of money?

Inoue: It seems like he made a lot of money, spent a lot of money, but then got tired of it all and came back to Inkopolis.

----Is changing gear abilities something like an indulgent hobby for him?

Inoue: It's more like something he’s indulged in for some years, and something that he returns to nowadays when he feels comfortable. From a young person's point of view, he looks really cool, but from an adult's point of view, it's like, "Is this guy okay?" With reasons to admire them, and to worry about them, it’s important to keep a\that sense of reality to people in the city.

---- By the way, what became of the relationship between Murch and Spyke?

Inoue : Those two are from the same northern region, and Murch thought of Spyke as a really amazing guy for making a life for himself out in the city. Murch came to the city with a pure heart, but as he sees more and more of the city and learns about the different sides of Spyke, he’s left conflicted. He’s shaken, as he only knows the way of life that Spyke taught him.

——What complicated feelings…! (laughs)

--PAGE 3--

An Expansion pass for the new and the nostalgic.

---- I’d like to ask you about the concept behind Splatoon 3’s music.

Inoue: The concept behind the music in S3 is based on the keyword "Bankara," and I wanted to create an atmosphere that is "bright, easy to groove to, but still heavy.” The music in S3, like the visual art, serves as a counter to S2’s. We’ve also been keeping in mind the feelings of "primary colors" and "impulses felt when starting something" from the first game.

---- Is C-Side currently the most popular main band in the Inkling world?

Inoue : They’re the one with the most momentum.

---- Why did they cover "Splattack!" and "Now or Never!"?

Inoue : The members of C-Side aren’t a well-behaved bunch. They covered Splattack without permission as a provocation, saying "C’mon, we can do Splattack even cooler than they do!” In the case of "Now or Never!”, the vocalist asserts that “we were the ones who did it first.” If you’re interested, the vocalist talks more about this in the Splatune 3 album jacket!

---- I’m looking forward to it. The members of Front Roe hide their faces, but they were members of Squid Squad in S1, weren’t they?

Inoue : Yes. After Ikkan [[Quinn]], the bass player, left the band, they went on hiatus. They started anew in the Splatlands, masking themselves to give themselves a fresh start.

---- The Squid Sisters have a new song, was it written for Splatfests?

Inoue : Yes, it was. The Splatfests in S3 have a first half and a second half, each with a different performance by Deep Cut. To fit with this, we added a song for the Squid Sisters, who perform in Inkopolis Plaza.

---- We can confirm that the Squid Sisters have new songs and are still active, but what is Off the Hook up to?

Inoue : Off the Hook is currently on a world tour, working with Damp Socks in between.

---- I did see Off the Hook and an Octoling in the trailer for "Side Order," the second wave of the "Expansion Pass.

Nogami : Yes, that's right. As you may have guessed, they're definitely going to make an appearance. I can't reveal the details yet, but it will be a new story featuring Off the Hook. The gameplay will be different and new, so please look forward to it.

---- I got the feeling that if team Order won the final Splatfest in 2, this is the kind of world it would have been.

Inoue: Yes, that's right. It's not something that we decided on from the get go, but when we started creating the expansion pass, we thought it'd be interesting to create a world of "if team Order had won."

---- By the way, is that Octoling Agent 8?

Sato : That... still needs to be researched.

---- Got it...! Alright, please tell us about your intention to bring back Inkopolis Plaza for the first wave of the Expansion Pass.

Inoue : There were a lot of people who first came to the Splatoon series with S2 and S3. We wanted to show S1 to those who knew of it, but hadn't actually played to see what Inkopolis Plaza and the Squid Sisters were really like.

---- When designing the current Inkopolis Plaza, did you think of it as how the place would appear 7 years after Splatoon 1?

Inoue : Yes. It was designed to give the feeling of coming back to your hometown after a 7 year absence and seeing that it's changed a bit. There's many parts that seem to have changed, but some things haven't. You can feel the nostalgia, but you can also see some realistic changes, such as the train station becoming more accessible for those with disabilities.

---- Going back there after 7 years, I felt it was surprisingly small.

Sato : Well, that's because Splatsville is huge (laughs). I think that is part of growing up. When I was a child, I felt that my elementary school district was big, but it was a different feeling going back there as an adult.

The attention to detail in game modes other than Turf War.

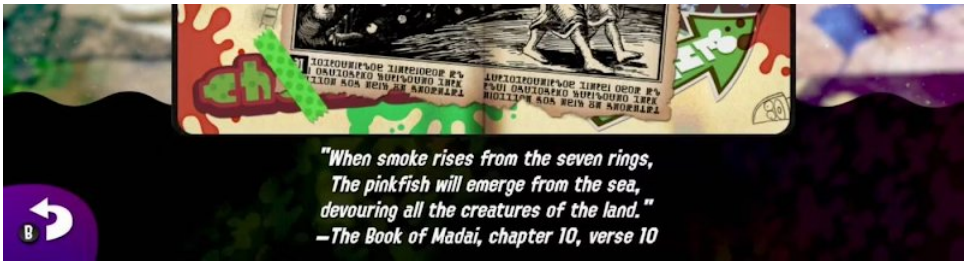
With Salmon Run having the “Next Wave” name to it now, how has the game mode evolved?

Sato: We took the game in the direction of it being a true evolution of S2’s Salmon Run. While keeping the fun of the random situations that makes Salmon Run so addicting, we’ve added in new waves of gameplay that make it possible to play longer, like the addition of King Salmonids and Big Run. That's what the "Next Wave" subtitle means.

---- Is Big Run to Salmon Run like what Splatfests are to Turf Wars?

Sato : Keeping with the “chaos” theme, we started with the idea of adding some chaos to Salmon Run as well. We thought that Salmonids appearing on Turf War stages would be chaotic, a big deal in the Inkling world. Such an event would be big news, so we thought we could turn that into something like a Splatfest, and that's how Big Run came to be in its current form. Salmon Run was originally held as an event in S2, and due to its popularity, it was changed to an almost daily event. Since what used to be an event became a daily thing, we wanted to have a Splatfest-like event with Salmon Run instead. This is something we thought about doing since S2, and now we were finally able to make it happen.

---- Is Big Run what was being prophesied about in the “Book of Madai" that appeared in Splatoon 2’s Sunken Scrolls?


"When smoke rises from the seven rings,
The pinkfish will emerge from the sea,
devouring all the creatures of the land."
—The Book of Madai, chapter 10, verse 10

A photo from one of Splatoon 2's Sunken Scrolls [[replaced with English version]]. Had Big Run already been predicted?!

Inoue: When an extremely large amount of Salmonids go upstream, that's what's called a Big Run. In the past, it's said that cities were destroyed by this terrifying phenomenon. Whether something is upsetting the Salmonids or if it's due to abnormal weather patterns, the cause of Big Run is unknown, but the current Big Run situation being experienced is unparalleled to date.

----Did you have the idea for the current state of Big Run in mind from that time?

Inoue: Big Run itself is a different thing since we thought of it after "3" started. However, our thinking from the start was that the Salmonids were ferocious beings that would swim upstream and destroy cities, so the Sunken Scroll is to convey that idea.

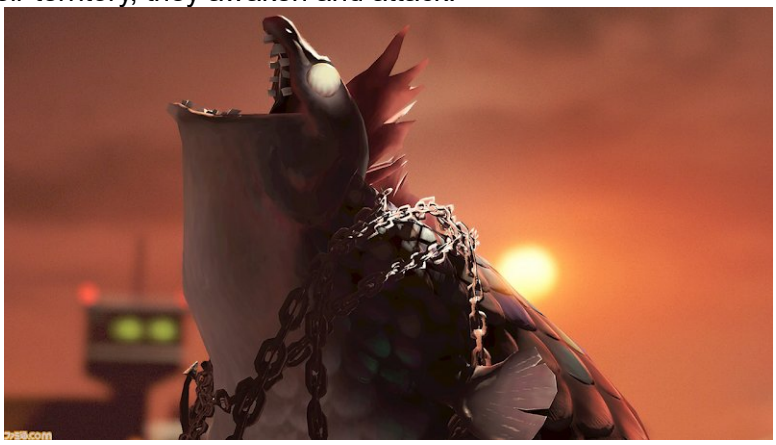
----I see. Were the egg cannons developed by Grizzco Industries?

Inoue: Yes. The golden eggs fired from the egg cannons are a very large source of energy in the Inkling world. It's a waste to fire those eggs away, but Grizzco had no choice but to harness that energy to compete with the mighty King Salmonids, so that's how those cannons came to be.

Sato: First and foremost, Grizzco wants us to deliver those precious Golden eggs to the basket. So they won't supply egg cannons unless there is a dangerous King Salmonid.

---- How do Cohozunas and Horrorboros become King Salmonids?

Inoue : It seems that only the most experienced and fierce individuals can become King Salmonds. The King Salmonids are ones who have survived many battles, and have been trained for a long time. Normally, King Salmonids sleep at the bottom of the sea, but when they catch a strong smell of those Inklings that they remember invading their territory, they awaken and attack.



---- Horrorboros have an especially long body, but is it really a Salmonid?

Inoue: There's this very intense waterfall, and Salmonids that successfully climb that waterfall develop a dragon-like body, and are called "Horrorboros."

----So you're saying that the process of climbing up the waterfall trains the Salmonid's body to take on that shape.

Inoue: That's correct. Horrorboros aren't a different species.

[[TN: There's a well known Chinese myth about a carp that climbs a waterfall and becomes a dragon (if you know Pokemon, that's what the Magikarp and Gyarados line is based on). The training for a Salmonid to become a Horrorboros is based on this myth. The JP name of Horrorboros literally means "dragon," which makes the reference even clearer.]]

---- I'd expect that there will continue to be more kinds of King Salmonids. Are there any plans to implement some kind of forecasting feature to determine which King Salmonids will appear?

Sato: Since King Salmonids dive in very deep waters, their ecology is not well understood, even with Grizzco's technology.
If their ecology is clarified someday, their appearances may be able to be accurately predicted, but it seems difficult with current technology. In the future, maybe something like AMeDAS will be developed.

[[TN: AMeDAS=Automated Meteorological Data Acquisition System. Technology used by the Japan Meteorological Agency for making weather forecasts.]]

----Looking forward to the development of something like a SALMeDAS! The gear you get from Salmon Run has a 'something you've seen somewhere before' design to it. Do you have a unified motif in mind for it?

Inoue: We wanted to make sure that you could get something distinct from the fashions sold in ordinary stores, so that's why we designed the gear that way.

The dry relationship with the Smallfry in Story Mode

---- In Story mode, a Smallfry becomes your player character's partner. What's the story behind their current relationship?

Inoue : We started off with the idea of "a youth wielding a bow in a chaotic and wild land, accompanied by a dog-like creature." As we were creating the new hero mode with this concept, we thought that we could create a variety of gimmicks by combining the existing gimmicks with a Smallfry, so the Smallfry officially became the player's partner.
[[TN: mfw]]

---- What led the Smallfry to become partnered with the new Agent 3?

Inoue : There wasn't anything dramatic that led up to it. The Smallfry was one that was lost, strayed from its school. It happened to meet Agent 3, a youth who makes a living off of hunting for scrap. The hungry Smallfry who will eat just about anything works together with 3 out of a shared motivation. For that reason, the Smallfry isn't doted on like a pet.

---- What a surprisingly dry relationship (laughs). With the addition of the Smallfry, I had the impression that the playstyles that you could experience on the stages were more varied than they were ever before.

Inoue: In S2, the stages were structured around going from a direct start to finish line, but this time we wanted to make something that would allow for a wider variety of play styles and elements to experience. We included actions you could do with the Smallfry, Squid Surges, Zipcaster levels, Crab Tank levels, and so on.

---- The names of the missions in Alterna are kind of like the fancy advertising blurbs you'd see for houses and apartments. How did you come to adopt this naming scheme?

[[TN: the English version of the game went with idioms and such for the mission names, but the naming scheme is different in JP. For example, the stages are called things like "Providing you with a place of relaxation where small birds gather." and "Relaxation and a sense of openness. A promenade filled with dappled sunlight." rather than "Octopods at Rest Tend to FLIP OUT!" and "The String's the Thing"]]

Inoue : Alterna is an underground shelter created as a new ideal home for the surviving members of the human race. Those kinds of advertising blurbs speak high praises of an ideal home, so I thought that atmosphere would be perfect for the mission names. Incidentally, the naming scheme in the English version is different, but carries that same sense of excitement.

----Do these kinds of advertising blurbs exist in the Inkling world too?

Inoue: As Inkling history follows closely to human history, I think they do exist.

----There's a lot of variety to the scenery of the stages, such as metallic or cyberpunk-like environments.

Inoue : This is also to tie into the theme of an ideal world. The names of the themes are in the artbook, but the motifs include "megalopolis", "brutalism", "sunlight filtering through the trees", "nostalgia", and other kinds of motifs that would arise when one imagines an ideal world.

----In one of the Sunken Scrolls, the Smallfry that was left behind during a Big Run is called a "keiji salmonid" - is it a special type of Salmonid?

Inoue : Keiji Salmonids are special individuals that are rarely born, have the disposition to eat just about anything, and possess the qualities to become a Hugefry. In real life as well, only about one out of every 10,000 salmon caught are the rare and high-end keiji salmon, so this became the motif that we used.

[[TN: This is a whole thing that was omitted in the English version of the scroll because frankly it doesn't really translate. In real life, young chum salmon born in Russian rivers that somehow get separated from their school and get mixed in with salmon that return to Japan to spawn are called "keiji" (鮭児). Like just mentioned above, about 1 in 10,000 salmon caught are keiji, and due to their rarity and desirable fatty flavor and texture, one fish can cost anywhere from $500 to $2000 USD!]]

---- So this rare individual just so happened to be working with the player character as a partner.

Inoue : I mentioned that the Smallfry was one that got lost. but even in real life, a chum salmon that strays from its school can become something special, so there is that factor as well.

----Was it the effects of the fuzzy ooze that caused the Octarians in Alterna to grow hair?

Inoue: under the effects of the fuzzy ooze, they're on the verge of becoming mammals.

In the case of the new Agent 3, when they come into contact with the ooze they suddenly grow hair. Are the Octarians supposed to be in the middle stage?

Inoue: That's right.

---- A map was released showing the location of the Splatlands and Inkadia. I thought things like, "oh, this area is really Atami!" It was interesting to see the geographical relationship between the two regions.
[[Atami: A city in Japan's Shizuoka prefecture, southwest of Tokyo]]

A link to Ask the Developer Vol. 7, an Interview with Splatoon's dev team that includes the first ever map of the world of Splatoon as we know it.

Inoue: There are also places that exist but aren't depicted on the map…

Sato: It's still undergoing research, so it may be revised in the future to be more geographically correct.

Nogami: Yeah, still in the process of being mapped out. (laughs)

----You're saying it could be redrawn then. (laughs)

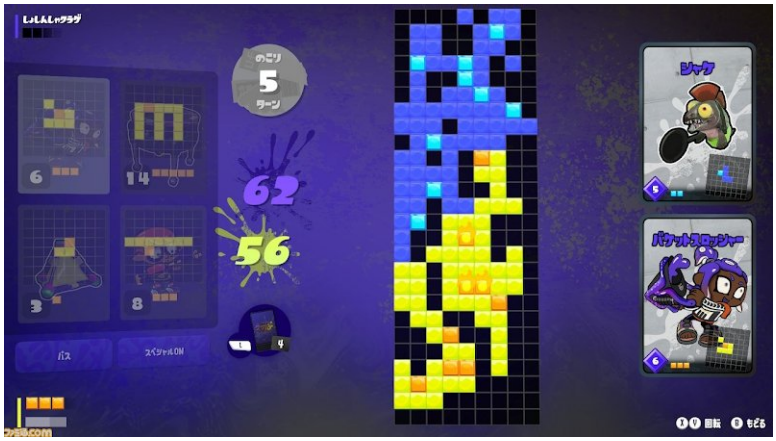
Tableturf, cards to collect and play

---- Please tell us about the process and intentions behind the implementation of Tableturf.

Nogami: When I was a kid I liked to collect cards, and there are a lot of people like that, isn't there? In this game I wanted there to be cards to collect from working at Grizzco and doing battles, and with the excitement from that concept, Tableturf was born as a way to play with those cards.

Inoue: Tableturf is an alternative to mini-games we have had in the past, like Squid Jump and Squid Beats.

We decided on a card game because we wanted to create a game that utilized the rewards available in various situations, such as from the catalog or as rewards from Story Mode.



----How is the response from the playerbase?

Nogami: We had hoped that people would enjoy Tableturf as a break from battles and Salmon Run, but we're glad to hear that some people are playing it enthusiastically.

Inoue: Tableturf has so much to it that it can hardly be called a mini-game. There's this expectation that card games that are a sub-element of a bigger game are usually interesting. I think we were able to exceed that expectation and made something nice. We are very happy to see that many are playing the game.

Sato: We will continue to make improvements to the game, so please play it!

--PAGE 4--

[[A small portion of the interview has been omitted, It is about the Koshien in Japan which…isn't really interesting to anyone outside of Japan.]]

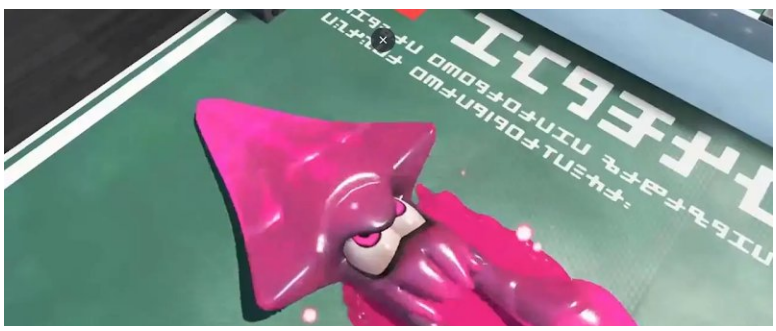
Splatoon 3, from here on

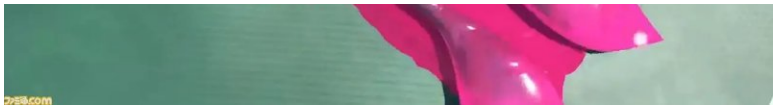
--What is your outlook for the future of "Splatoon 3"?

Sato: We will try to meet the expectations of our players, and we will continue to work on things that will make them think, "I didn't see that coming." So from here on, we'll be doing our best!

Inoue: Splatoon 3 started with the arrival of the "Bankara" craze, but now we can go to Inkopolis Plaza and turn into Krakens once more. I hope to show how this mix of the old and the new will work together to create another boom in the Inkling world.

Nogami: Firstly, we'd like to continue to provide updates season by season. In the process, we hope to prepare some things that will come as a surprise, so please look forward to that.





----Now, please give a final message to all the fans out there.

Nogami: More than half a year has passed since the release of the game, and many people are playing it, for which I am truly grateful. The best thing we can do for the players is to make sure that as many people as possible play in the world of "Splatoon 3" so that they can always find someone to play with when they want to.
Whether you have been playing for a long time or just started recently, we will do our best to make sure that everyone can enjoy the game in a variety of ways.

Inoue: It's been almost eight years since the release of "Splatoon" in 2015, and the Inkling's world has expanded so much since then, that it's hard to predict where it'll go next.
This is due in no small part to players that battle it out as Inklings and Octolings, take on jobs at Grizzco, and enjoy Splatfests.
In the time of the first game, I transmitted a lot of messages to the Inkling world, but now I feel as if I've become a part of the Inkling's world. I hope to continue to enjoy this world together with our fans.

Sato: From the time of the first Splatoon game, we have always believed that "completion is not the end", but rather that the game is only possible with the support of everyone who plays it. That's something that won't change in the future. We will continue to do our best so that not only those who have played Splatoon up until now, but also those who have just started playing can enjoy it as well.

[[Now THIS is the longest interview I have translated so far. Thankz 4 reading to the end :]]]